

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC #9213-83

22 December 1983

Att. DDI 8565-83
ER 83-4892

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM : Major General Edward B. Atkeson, USA
National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces

SUBJECT : OSWR Future Soviet Weapons Assessment

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1. This is in reply to your note of 6 December 1983 requesting my opinion of the subject document.

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2. I believe that OSWR and SOVA have made a useful contribution to analytical methodology with the techniques they developed in support of this paper. Essentially, they suggest that quantification of analysts' judgments regarding:

- the degree of change in the severity of threat posed by a given weapons system,
- the number of such weapons deployed, and
- the flexibility of the system design

can yield useful indices regarding the magnitude of future threats posed by developments in a selected mission area. The proposition is an interesting one, and one which should be further explored for possible applications and development. The authors are careful to note that the indices which result are "only a measure of the threat change from 1985 to 1995," and that "for weapons with low indices, it is still important to devote significant intelligence resources to them, either because they present a high absolute threat (e.g., ICBMs and IRBMs) or because the significance of breakout would be exceptionally important (e.g., ASW developments)."

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3. As potentially useful as the technique may appear for internal analysis, I do not believe that it constitutes an approach to program justification to which we would want to afford great visibility in its current form. Besides the pitfalls cited in the authors' cautionary note, the technique gives rise to questions regarding:

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- the acceptability of the analysts' opinions upon which the indices depend,
- the possibility of other factors, not included in the indices construction, counterbalancing the judgments (e.g.: the development of counter-technology or new operational developments mitigating the effectiveness of weapons posited),
- constraints of cost factors and of Soviet operational doctrine on the likelihood of deployments.

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4. The effort which OSWR and SOVA have applied to this project can be put to good use. I recommend that you ask those offices to review their work and to develop a paper which would cast the mid-1990's threat in terms of specificity akin to the language you used in your lecture to the Army Command and General Staff College on 13 December (extract attached).

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5. I also recommend that the authors of this paper be asked to restructure the presentation to make it suitable for publication in Studies in Intelligence. I believe the concept has merit and should be exposed to an audience where it is quite likely to give rise to additional ideas of value.



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Edward B. Atkeson

Attachment

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI
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VIA : C/NIC

FROM : NIO/GPF

SUBJECT : OSWR Future Soviet Weapons Assessment

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